

DRAFT OF PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT OF A MEETING

WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS (to be given out to the press.)

The President stated that for some time he had been disturbed by reports that an attempt might be made to subject the Central Intelligence Agency to a type of Congressional investigation which would inevitably disclose highly classified security matters to potential enemies of the United States. The President expressed to the Congressional leaders with whom he consulted this morning his feeling that if such an investigation were to take place it would result in serious harm to our national security. He made it clear to the Congressional leaders that he recognized that Congress in the exercise of its legislative functions has a clear right to the information that is essential to it to carry out this duty. It was made clear that the Director of Central Intelligence had been in close touch with the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees of the two Houses of the Congress and that he had furnished these Committees such information as they had sought. This relationship should continue and these Committees should be kept currently advised of CIA activities within the wise provision included by the Congress in the National Security Act of 1947 "that the Director of Central Intelligence shall be responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure." It was the President's firm conviction that the Executive and the Congress should cooperate in carrying out this legislative mandate.

The President further expressed to the Congressional leaders his view that it was essential that the Congress should be satisfied as to the integrity of the administration of CIA, particularly in connection with the handling of the unvouchered funds intrusted to it as well as in its exercise of the powers and duties conferred upon it under the National Security Act of 1947 and directives of the National Security Council thereunder. He advised the Congressional leaders of correspondence which he had had with the Director of Central Intelligence and of his decision as indicated in this correspondence and as requested by the Director of Central Intelligence to set up a Board of Consultants, with duties and functions outlined in that correspondence.

The Congressional leaders present expressed their unanimous concurrence in the view that the legislative and investigative functions should be exercised by the Congress insofar as CIA is concerned, in a manner to protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure and they welcomed the President's action in setting up the high level Board of Consultants.